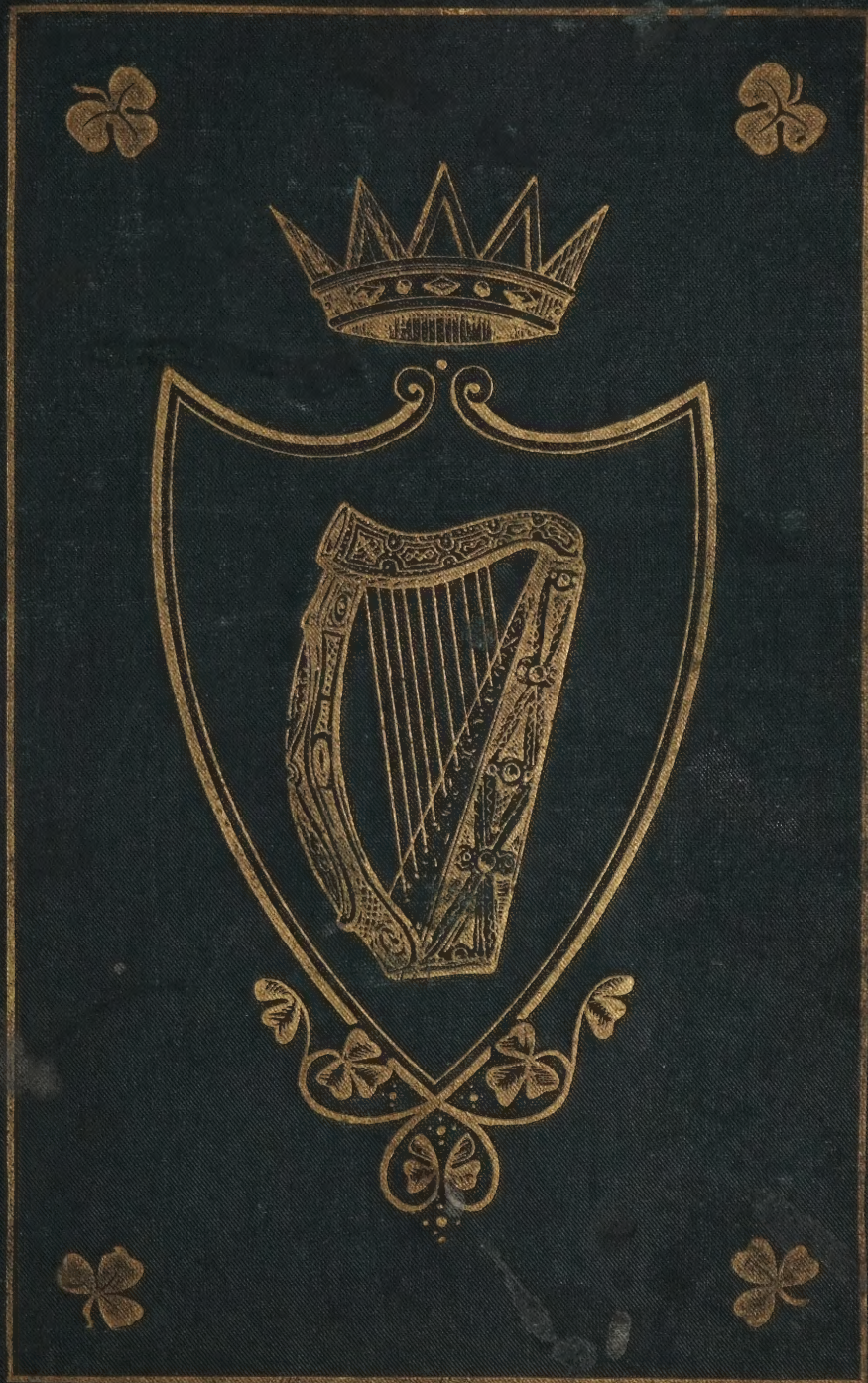


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# HISTORY

OF THE



# CLAN O'BYRNE.



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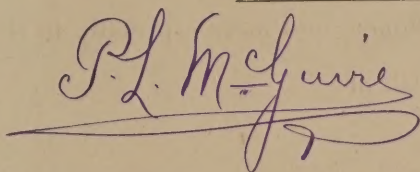
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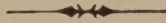
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## P R E F A C E .



THE "History of the Clan O'Byrne and Other Leinster Septs" is taken from the same sources as that of the "Clan O'Toole," to which extensive and exhaustive work the reader can have recourse for further particulars concerning this noble Clan.

This condensed "History of the Clan O'Byrne" is intended for those who cannot conveniently get the larger work. That it may prove instructive and interesting to all Irishmen, and more especially to the members of the Clan O'Byrne, is the wish of

THE AUTHOR.



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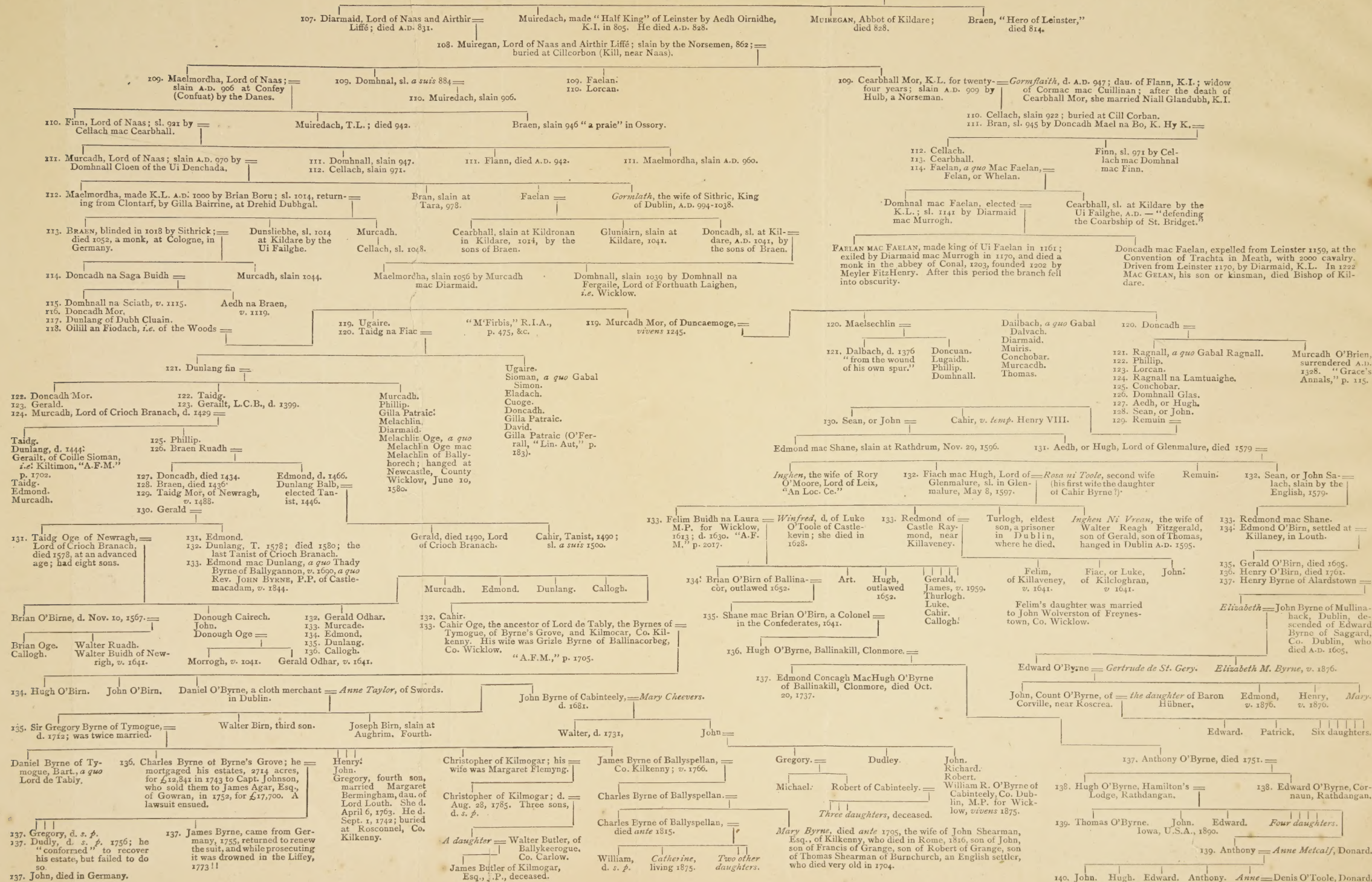
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(THE CLAN O'BYRNE.)

106. Ruadrach, K.L., died A.D. 785; he defeated Bran Ardcaem, K. Ui Muiredagh, at the Curragh in 782.





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AN IRISH CHIEF.



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## TO HISTORY OF

### THE CLAN O'BYRNE.

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THE HISTORY  
OF THE  
CLAN O'BYRNE  
(UI FAELAN).

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THE Clan O'Byrne being of the same stock as the Clan O'Toole, and claiming the same descent, were for so many centuries of their history so interwoven together, their territories in close proximity to each other, and their mutual interests cemented together by intermarriage, that we consider it may be of interest to our readers, if we supplement our attempts at writing the history of the Clan O'Toole by giving as an appendatory synopsis the leading points in the fates and fortunes of the Clan O'Byrne, who so often shared with the O'Tooles the victor's glory, until by fraud, treachery, and the power of might over right, they became fellow-sufferers in the confiscations and persecutions of the times. We may rest assured, that whenever an O'Byrne was in straits, an O'Toole was not far off; and this rule had equal applicability when positions were reversed.

The Clan O'Byrne were descended from Heremon. Heber and Heremon were leaders of the Spanish colony which, according to the best authorities, succeeded in establishing itself in Ireland, and reducing the



possessors of the soil under its own dominion, about a thousand years before the birth of Christ.

The country was divided among the conquerors in the following manner :—The fair provinces of the south were allotted to Heber. Leinster acknowledged the sovereignty of Heremon. The rude coast and barren mountains of Connaught were granted to the native tribes called Firbolgs, who had assisted the invaders. One year, however, had scarcely expired when Heber laid claim to the whole island, which was resisted by Heremon. A battle ensued, in which Heber was defeated and slain, and Heremon, like Romulus, became sole ruler of the kingdom.

From the death of Heremon to the accession of Eochah, a period of nearly one thousand years, Ireland was governed (with few exceptions) by a single king, chosen from one or other of the royal houses. Heber, Heremon, and Ir Eocha IX., however, raised the provinces into kingdoms, investing the chiefs of the several tribes with their respective sovereignties.

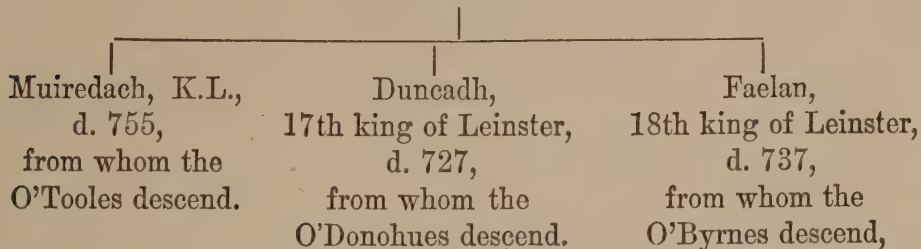
In pursuance of this arrangement, the descendants of Heremon were kings of Leinster; those of Ir, kings of Ulster; and the chief of the Firbolgs kings of Connaught. There was, however, one king superior over all, to whom the others were bound to do homage and to pay tribute.

Eocha IX. was of the race of Heremon, and the crown of Ireland remained (with but two exceptions) in his family to the time of Cahir Mor—Charles the Great.

This monarch was descended from Ugane Mor, a Heremonian, by his son Laogare Lorc, between whose issue and that of his brother Cobthac, Leinster was in after times divided. Cahir Mor reigned over the entire island in the second century of the Christian era. His elevation from the throne of Leinster to the supreme rule is dated A.D. 144. Three years after, he was slain in a battle fought near Tailton, in Westmeath. He left thirty sons, of whom ten only had issue; of these the most celebrated were Rossa Failge and Feacha Baiceada. From the latter are descended the O'Byrnes, the O'Tooles, and the O'Cavanaghs, and other of the chief families of Leinster. The history of the O'Byrnes is the same as the

O'Tooles, until we come down to Murcadh Mor, 104th on the O'Toole stem, who was the common ancestor of the O'Tooles, O'Donohues of Leinster, and the O'Byrnes. By his three sons, thus:

## MURCADH MOR.



taking their name from their grandfather, Bran Mut, their tribe name being Hy Faelan, their territory being situated in and about Naas, and as far north as Maynooth, from which place they were driven into the southern portion of the Wicklow mountains by the Norman invaders, about the year A.D. 1202.

Soon after the death of Murcadh Mor, who by his will divided his territories amongst his three sons, Duncadh and Faelan quarrelled, and a fierce battle ensued between them, near Eadstown, which lies between Naas and Blessington. In this battle Duncadh was defeated and driven back to the present County Dublin, which his descendants continued to possess until the arrival of the Danes, and subsequently the Norman English, when his territories were divided amongst the English of the Pale. Many of his descendants are still to be found in West Wicklow and Carlow, decent, respectable people, but without any, or little, knowledge of their ancient lineage. Their pedigree is given by Mr. Gilbert, in his history of the City of Dublin.

The Clan O'Byrne, or Ui Faelan, as it was known in Irish history, can boast of many a noble and valiant warrior, kings of Leinster, down to the English invasion. It was one of this Clan that held the sceptre of Leinster at the battle of Clontarf, where he was nobly seconded by the O'Tooles, of which clan five of its princes were slain. With the Danes of Dublin, the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles were occasionally in alliance, but



more commonly at war; abundance of cause for quarrel was always present, owing to the proximity of their territories.

The O'Byrnes became princes of Lower Leinster, and were seated in a district called Ranelagh, or the country of Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne.

According to Ptolemy, the ancient inhabitants of Wicklow and the present County Kildare were the "Cauci," supposed to be of Belgic-Gaulic extraction; but afterwards is chiefly celebrated as the country of the O'Tooles and the O'Byrnes.

The O'Byrnes occupied the northern part of Kildare, and the O'Tooles the southern part of Kildare and the northern part of Wicklow; as Glendalough, which was the ancient city of the O'Tooles; also Fertire and Ferra Cualan, on the eastern side of the mountain; but after the Norman invasion, the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles were driven into the mountains. By a long and heroic resistance they here maintained their independence for over four hundred years, after nearly all the other princes had yielded submission to the English invader.

The O'Byrnes, driven from Kildare (A.D. 1202), located themselves along the seaboard of Wicklow, from Newtownmountkennedy to Arklow, whilst the Feagh MacHughs possessed the inland portion, called Ranelagh, or Glenmalure.

The two clans, affiliated in race and in blood, appear to have been almost always on good terms with each other, and to have worked harmoniously together against the common enemy.

No doubt, the O'Byrnes had this advantage over their neighbour, they were more distant from the Pale, and not subject to the frequent attacks that the O'Tooles had to be constantly on the "*qui vive*" to repel. The O'Tooles, lying between them and the common foe, had to bear the first of the onslaught and the brunt of the battle, while the O'Byrnes were never dilatory in filling up from the rear, and giving any of the English garrison that might have succeeded in penetrating beyond the O'Toole country a very hot reception. This fact of the O'Tooles being, for such a length of years, almost incessantly engaged in the hot contests of border warfare, will go far to account for their ranks being more

thinned, as more of them fell in battle, and hence it is that the O'Byrnes, in their descendants, are far more numerous than those of the O'Tooles.

The Danes, prior to the twelfth century, had established themselves in a district of the county Dublin, named Fingall, and so named appropriately as the granary of their city. For their occupation of it the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles demanded tribute, and this same tribute led to many bloody battles. When the clans were successful, the tribute was paid, and hostages given, but when the fortunes of war were reversed, and the Danes gained a victory, they in turn carried fire and sword and a war of extermination into the enemy's country.

The Danes of Dublin having been worsted by the Anglo-Normans, the city and the surrounding country changed hands, and was to be henceforth known under the name of the "English Pale." The native Leinstermen soon found out, to their cost, that this change did nothing to lessen their troubles, as those new colonists possessed all the evil qualities of their predecessors in more fully developed degree, and, in addition, had several new ones of their own, among which was an inordinate ambition and the spirit of cupidity. It was not long, then, until the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles declared war against the inhabitants of Dublin, and the contest, with only brief intervals, was carried on, with much bloodshed and devastation, and with varying success, for many succeeding generations, the particulars of which we have endeavoured to narrate in the History of the Clan O'Toole.

In the year 1394 there was a battle between the O'Byrnes and the English, in which the former were defeated, and compelled to prostrate themselves for the moment; but it soon passed over, and they stood once more erect, independent, and more defiant than ever.

In the reign of Richard II., Thomas Mowbray, Earl of Nottingham, Earl-Marshal of England, was entrusted with a commission from the sovereign to receive homage and oaths of fealty from the chiefs of Leinster, namely, The O'Byrne, O'Nolan, O'Morough, O'Morca, Mao-



Murrough, O'Connor, and others.\* This homage was proposed and accepted upon very hard conditions. The chiefs were bound, under pain of very considerable fines, payable at the Apostolic Chamber (to wit), for O'Byrne, 20,000 marks; for O'Nolan, 10,000 livres; and for others in proportion. They were required, not only to persevere in their submission, but also, on a day specified, to surrender all their lands and possessions in Leinster, and to place them in the king's hands, to be held by him and his successors; and, moreover, to enter into his majesty's service, and to lend him aid in war against their fellow-countrymen. To indemnify them for the loss of their property, the king's pay was offered them, and pensions were tendered to some of the chiefs. It was permitted to them to make incursions on the lands of their countrymen in the other provinces, and to appropriate to themselves all that they could win by force of arms.

The chiefs, however, after a short time, justly considered that a forced submission and extorted oaths were in no way binding, again took arms in 1395, when Roger Mortimer, Earl of March, was sent over as lord lieutenant. Aided by the Earl of Ormond, the new viceroy laid the O'Byrnes' country waste, and stormed their Castle of Wicklow. The fortress was taken, and in honour of the exploit, the lord lieutenant raised the seven following gentlemen to the rank of knighthood, viz.: Christopher Preston, John Bedlow, Edmond and John Loundres, William Nugent, Walter de la Hide, and Robert Cadell.

Shortly after, O'Byrne's old ally, O'Toole, came to his aid, attacked the English, and defeated them, spiking 60 of their heads on the gates of O'Toole's castle as a warning, and, following up their victory, the united clans marched after the English, and overtaking them near Kilkenny, a fierce battle ensued, in which the English were again defeated, their forces

\* The reader may ask himself how it was that The O'Toole was omitted from this list, and not included among the chieftains invited to this sham conference. The reason is simply this: that The O'Toole always spurned the idea of holding any parley with the English, not only now, but whenever, in after times, they adopted that line of tactics; hence Mowbray omitted his name, and it would have been better for O'Byrne that his name had been left out also.

totally routed, and Roger, Earl of March, heir-apparent to the English crown was killed at Kenlis (Kells) in the year A.D. 1398.

In 1414, John Talbot, Lord Furnival, marched an army through the territories of the O'Byrnes and other Leinster chieftains, but without any serious result to the peace and well-being of the clans, although high praise was accorded to him by the English, for what we know not, except that they wanted to compliment him upon his having the courage to undertake such a march, and the good generalship to bring back his troops with their lives. Anyway, he did not enlarge by his expedition the boundaries of the English Pale, nor did he render greater security to life and property in those parts of the province that were illegally wrested from their lawful owners.

Within no long space of time after this period the history of Ireland begins to assume a new complexion. Jealousies and disputes, which were not unfrequently referred to the decision of arms, arose from time to time amongst the heads of the great houses of the English Palesmen, who severally sought to strengthen themselves with alliances, cemented by inter-marriages, and treaties for mutual assistance and defence with the chiefs of the native Irish.

But of all the great Anglo-Hibernian houses, none were so closely united to the Irish nation, whether by intermixture of blood, or community of sentiment and feeling, as the noble race of the Geraldines. In all the wars maintained by the people against English oppression, whether in matters civil or religious, they always took so prominent a part that they have been described in the chronicles of the period as "*Hibernis ipsis Hiberniores.*" With the O'Byrnes they were in alliance from an early period, and, as will be seen hereafter, they, on more than one occasion, were indebted to them for good services.

In 1521 the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles were again in arms. The Earl of Surrey marched an army into their country, and, pitted against a force their superiors in number, discipline, and appointments, the result was naturally a temporary defeat for the clans. A brave resistance, however, was maintained, and it is recorded that a regiment of cavalry, commanded



by a knight named Bulman, was reduced to an infantry corps for having been too largely endowed, on their approaching the Irish steel, with that virtue which, when properly exercised, is very laudable, and styled "discretion," but when carried out to too great an extent (as upon this occasion), comes under the non-euphonious heading of "cowardice."

On the 20th June, 1523, James, Earl of Desmond, on his own behalf, and that of O'Brien, Prince of Thomond, and many other Irish chiefs, entered into a treaty with Francis I. of France, offensive and defensive, against Henry VIII. of England, whereby, amongst other things, they bound themselves to make no peace with that monarch in which all the contracting parties would not be included. During the captivity of Francis, peace was concluded between England and France, without allusion to the Earl of Kildare, then lord deputy, who was likewise a Geraldine. Henry VIII. sent orders to have the Earl Desmond arrested for high treason. The order, however, was not carried out, and remained unexecuted. The O'Byrnes and O'Tooles appeared in arms to support the Earl of Desmond, at the instigation, it is said, of the lord deputy, who secretly supported his kinsman. In a short time the Earl of Kildare was deposed and arraigned before the Privy Council of England, firstly, for neglecting the orders of the king to arrest Desmond; secondly, for having formed an alliance with the Irish enemy; thirdly, for having hung good subjects, whose only crime was being attached to the Butlers; fourthly, for having maintained a secret correspondence with O'Neill, O'Connor, and other enemies, and having incited them to make incursions on the lands of the Earl of Ormond while lord deputy.

Kildare, notwithstanding the dangers that menaced him, escaped, through the intercession of his friends, and on the downfall of Cardinal Wolsey, the implacable enemy of the Geraldines, was restored to office.

Immediately on his reassumption he proceeded to strengthen himself by Irish alliances. He gave his daughters in marriage to O'Connor, Faly, and O'Carroll, and endeavoured on all sides to draw more closely together those ties which of old mutually bound his house and the native chiefs. He also entered into open war against his ancient enemies, the Butlers,

ravaging the lands of the Earl of Ossory and his friends, and carrying off considerable booty.

In consequence of complaints from the Butlers and others to the English court, Kildare was again summoned to England, and having first appointed his son, "Silken Thomas," vice-deputy, he obeyed the summons, and was, upon his arrival in London, incarcerated in the Tower.

Thomas, becoming exasperated by the news, falsely spread in Dublin, that his father had been executed for high treason in London, flung away the sword of state in the council chamber, and raised his standard against the king. The Irish chiefs flew to his aid in great numbers. In the neighbourhood of Dublin rebellion was general. The district called Fingal was laid waste by the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles, and for a time fortune favoured Thomas Fitzgerald in all his enterprises.

In 1535 Sheffington was appointed lord deputy, and Lord Grey was sent to his assistance with a powerful army from England. It appears from a letter addressed about this time to Lord Cromwell by Aylmer, Lord Chief Justice, and Allen, Master of the Rolls, that they found affairs in the worst possible condition. They stated that of the six baronies which form the county of Kildare, five were utterly wasted by fire and sword; that the greater part of the County Meath had shared the same fate; that Powerscourt, the building of which had cost 5,000 marks (£3,333 6s. 8d.), had been destroyed by the O'Tooles and O'Byrnes; that Fitzgerald had taken Rathdangan; that the plague raged in Dublin; that the deputy was ill, and unable to defend the castle of Maynooth; and that no reliance could be placed on the fidelity of O'Neill.

Soon—too soon—however, a different hue came over the aspect of affairs. The tide of victory which had so long flown in favour of the enemies of English domination at length ebbed, and well-nigh overwhelmed in its reflux all who were concerned in the revolt.

Thomas Fitzgerald, being closely pursued by superior forces, surrendered himself to Lord Grey on promise of full pardon. His five uncles, who were still under arms, also surrendered on the same conditions, and Grey sent them prisoners to England.



When on board the vessel which was to convey them from the Irish shore, they inquired of the captain what was her name, and upon being informed that she was called the "Cow," they yielded to despair, as they remembered an ancient prophecy which predicted "that the five sons of an earl should be transported to England in the belly of a cow, and should no more return." They, together with their nephew, the young Earl of Kildare, were tried for high treason, found guilty, and executed at Tyburn.

The O'Byrnes and O'Tooles were now left to fight out their own corner, which they did right gallantly and well. They succeeded in having Lord Grey recalled to England, a disgraced man, but, unfortunately, only to receive in his place a far worse type in the person of St. Leger.

The new deputy was a wily and crafty man, who saw that the breeding of internal dissension among the Irish was a far more efficacious plan, and better adapted to forward the nefarious designs of the English garrison, than encountering them in open warfare, although he could place ten to one in the field against them.

He soon commenced to set the Irish chieftains and the English nobles by the ears, breaking up the bond of unity which existed between them. He also sowed the seeds of contention among the clans by inducing some of the chieftains to take their lands and hold them on fiants and letters patent from the English king, instead of as heretofore, being elected thereto by their clansmen, who naturally repudiated this change, and repelled those English appointed chieftains, electing by popular voice chiefs of their own choice in their stead.

We regret to have to acknowledge that the then chieftain of the Clan O'Byrne was not an exception to the many chieftains who were weak enough to succumb to the intrigues of the Castle, and who were either browbeaten or bribed into accepting their lands from Henry VIII.

We read in the State Papers of that period that Thadeus O'Byrne, chief of the clan, having submitted, and accepted Henry's terms, entered into a further compact with him on 22nd January, 1535, in which, among

other things, he promised not to adhere to any Irishman against the king or his subjects, or maintain any enemy or rebel of the king, especially those of the nation of the O'Tooles fleeing into his. This is a sad record to have to make against a chief of that gallant clan; but we are consoled by the reflection that it was only the act of an individual, and the clan hastened to wipe out the stigma by indignantly rejecting the terms, repudiating the chief that made them, and electing in his stead the famous Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne, who shed so much lustre and renown on their name, their clan, and their nation.

We have striven, in the history of the Clan O'Toole, which at this period is so mingled with that of the O'Byrnes, to depict some of the daring deeds and gallant exploits of this great chief, and to our reader, who would wish to study what a brave stand Feagh made for his faith and fatherland, we would invite him to peruse it.

The O'Byrnes along the sea coast, who were followers of Thady, became somewhat "Unionist" (to use a modern expression) in their notions, and looked on their kinsman, Feagh, as a misguided and hot-headed man, whose extreme notions were to be discountenanced; they also seem to have viewed him more or less as an usurper in his position as chief of the clan; but this was an absurd notion, as the same blood flowed through the veins of the Feagh MacHughs as through the MacTeigues, although twelve generations had passed away since they parted from the common stem, and since the sceptre of the Clan O'Byrne was wielded by one of the branch of Clan Ranelagh.

In the reign of Henry VIII. a brother of Feagh MacHugh's, Thady O'Byrne, a monk of the Order of St. Francis, was arrested and sent a prisoner to Dublin Castle. Among his papers was found a letter addressed to O'Neill, Prince of Tyrone, and signed by the Bishop of Metz, from which the following extract may be of interest:—

"MY DEAR O'NEILL,

"You have at all times, as likewise your forefathers, been faithful to our Mother Church of Rome.



“His Holiness Paul, now Pope, aided by the Holy Fathers, has lately a prophecy of St. Lasirian, Irish Bishop of Cashel, where it is foretold that the Mother Church of Rome must fall when the faith of the Catholics of Ireland shall be subdued. Consequently, for the glory of Mother Church, the honour of St. Peter, and your own safety, suppress heresy and the enemies of his Holiness; for, when the Roman Creed shall be lost with you, the See of Rome must likewise fall.

“This is why the Council of Cardinals has thought fit to encourage the people of Ireland (that sacred island), being convinced that the Mother Church, having a worthy son like you, and others who will come to your succour, can never fall, but that she will always possess, in spite of the prophecy, more or less credit in Britain.

“Having thus obeyed the orders of the Sacred Council, we recommend your royal person to the Most Holy Trinity, to the Blessed Virgin, to Saints Peter and Paul, and to the whole Celestial Court. Amen.”

The Earl of Desmond, after gallantly maintaining the struggle for some years, now found his forces diminishing, while his enemies were being daily increased by fresh reinforcements from England, issued circular letters to the principal noblemen of Leinster, with whose principles he was acquainted, exhorting them to take part in the defence of their religion and country against the common enemy.

The following letter was addressed by the Earl of Desmond to Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne, chief of the O'Byrnes of Wicklow:—

“NEWCASTLE, 29th *November*, 1579.

“MY DEARLY BELOVED FRIEND,—I recommend myself to you—as my brother and myself have undertaken to uphold our Catholic Faith against the English, who, not satisfied with overthrowing the Holy Church, wish to possess our inheritance and reduce us to a state of bondage.

“We beseech you to take part with us in the defence of our country, according to your conscience and the dictates of nature. If you fear being abandoned when embarked in the affair, bear in mind:—That we have undertaken it under the authorization of our Holy Father the Pope

and King Philip, who have engaged to assist us in this undertaking when necessary ; consequently, you risk nothing in the enterprise.

“ You may be certain we shall never form a treaty with the enemy, without your consent, for which this letter shall be a sufficient guarantee.”

Whether it was in consequence of this letter, or that it served as an additional stimulus to their own resolves, we find Feagh Mac Hugh, in common with the other Leinster chiefs, up in arms in the following year, A.D. 1580, in defence of the same cause which Desmond so vigorously supported.

The English Court now appointed Arthur Grey, Lord Baron of Wilton, Knight of the Garter, as Lord Deputy for Ireland. The new viceroy landed in Dublin in August, 1580.

Several noblemen, both of Leinster and the South, became indignant at this time, witnessing the persecutions to which Holy Church was subjected—the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass abolished, the clergy outlawed and hunted, the churches profaned, pillaged, and handed over to the new conforming Protestant clergy ; seeing all this, and dreading the storm of increasing strife, they united in one bond for their mutual support, to check the inroads of the ruthless persecutions to which Holy Church was being daily subjected.

Some of the principals of this laudable coalition were James Eustace, (Lord Baltinglass), Feagh Mac Hugh O’Byrne, O’Toole, the brother-in-law of Lord Baltinglass, and Captain Fitzgerald ; the latter of whom had quitted the Queen’s service for the purpose of striking a blow for Holy Faith ; but their intentions were discovered before their final arrangements were made, and several of the promoters of the conspiracy were arrested and put to death ; others fled the country, while some had the satisfaction in a short while after, of seeing some of the flower of the English army bite the dust.

So anxious was the new lord deputy to signalise his advent among the Irish by some signal victory, that upon his arrival in Dublin, he would not wait for the usual ceremonies of salaams and kotows from the hungry hangers-on of the Castle, that were always enacted at the installation of



a new viceroy; he even postponed the investiture of the "sword of state," and wished to pose as the wielder of a sword to be used for far different purposes than this ornamental bauble. His soul panted for the fray, and by a lucky coincidence, the Leinster chieftains were just in the mood to oblige him.

Feagh Mac Hugh O'Byrne, Lord Baltinglass, and The O'Toole, occupied the defiles of Glendalough, Glenmalure, and Glen Imayle, and from these positions Lord Grey vowed to dislodge them; but his lordship was rashly premature. He assembled all the English troops, horse, foot, and artillery, available in Leinster, and marched them to Glenmalure, where he found his opponents quite ready and willing to receive him; in fact, the effusive and demonstrative nature of the reception was so warm that it completely overwhelmed him.

This great battle of Glenmalure, proving as it did for the thousandth time, the indomitable and unflinching bravery of the Irish soldier, was commenced by Lord Grey personally posting the cavalry which he commanded so as to surround a wood in which a contingent of the Irish were, and to so hem them in as to avoid any chance of escape. It was maintained with stern obstinacy and great spirit for many hours by both sides, and terminated in the complete victory of Feagh Mac Hugh and his brave compatriots; the English soldiers were cut to pieces, and the vaunting lord deputy and the remnant of his cavalry had to make a hasty and undignified retreat to the shelter of Dublin Castle.

The loss to the English was immense, and besides the eight hundred soldiers slain on the field, Sir Peter Carew, Colonel Moore, Capt. Audley, and many other distinguished English commanders went to swell the roll of fatal casualties; and here, too, at the hands of the clansmen, retributive justice overtook the notorious Captain Cosby, the cold-blooded murderer of Mullaghmast.

The details of the battle of Glenmalure are entered into at considerable length in the History of the Clan O'Toole, to which we refer our readers, and trust that it will be of interest to them.

In these wars of 1580, and following years, we find the Irish and

Anglo-Hibernian chiefs, ancient and modern, with the usual doomed fatality of Irish efforts, disunited—some for, some against.

This war is sometimes known in history as the “Tyrone War,” the Earl of Tyrone being the commander-in-chief.

It is also designated by Philip O’Sullivan, in his Catholic History, as “*Bellum quindecim annorum*,” because it commenced in the thirty-first year of Queen Elizabeth, and continued until her death, which took place in the forty-fifth year of her reign.

Hitherto, the wars with the English were for the preservation of their hearths and homes; but in this struggle, to make it still more deadly, was added the freedom of their holy religion, which these Saxon marauders wanted to deprive the Irish of. Hence it was that this war was truly and really a religious war, and those Catholics who lost their lives and their estates through it, sacrificed them nobly for holy Church and conscience sake.

A short summary by provinces of those who fought on one side or the other may be of interest; and we give, first:

#### MODERN IRISH CHIEFTAINS IN ELIZABETH’S INTEREST.

##### MUNSTER.

Thomas Butler (surnamed Dhuv), the Black Ormond.

Barry The Great (Mor), Viscount Buttevant.

Mac Pierce Butler, Baron Dunboyne.

Courcey—Baron de Courcey.

Burke—Baron Castleconnell.

##### CONNAUGHT.

Ulick Burke and Richard, his son.

Earl of Clanrickarde, surnamed The Naval, who disputed the estates of Clan Williams.

Mac Pheoris (Bermingham), Baron of Dunmorris.



## MODERN IRISH CHIEFTAINS SUPPORTING ELIZABETH.

## LEINSTER.

Henry, William, and Gerald Fitzgerald, Earls of Kildare.  
Preston, Viscount Gormanstown.  
Nugent, Baron of Delvin.  
Fleming, Baron of Slane.  
Barnewall, Baron of Trimblestown.  
Plunkett, Baron of Killeen.

## ANCIENT IRISH CHIEFTAINS SUPPORTING ELIZABETH.

## MUNSTER.

Donogh O'Brien, Prince of Limerick, Earl of Thomond.  
Murrough O'Brien, Baron of Inchiquin.  
Mac Carthy Riagh, Prince of Carberry.  
Charles Mac Carthy, son of Dermod, Prince of Muskerry.

## CONNAUGHT.

O'Conor Don, Prince of Magherry.  
Prince O'Melachlan.

## ANCIENT IRISH CHIEFTAINS WHO SUPPORTED FAITH AND FATHERLAND.

## ULSTER.

Hugh O'Neill, Prince and Earl of Tyrone, with his party, as follows:  
Macgennis, Prince of Iveach.  
Mac Mahon, Prince of Uriel.  
Mac Guire, Prince of Fermanagh.  
O'Cahane, Prince of Arachty.  
James and Ronald Mac Donnell, Princes of Glynn.  
O'Hanlon, Prince of Orior.

O'Donnell, Prince of Tyrconnell, with his party, as follows :

Mac Sweeney, Prince of Tuach.

Mac Sweney, Prince of Fenid.

Mac Sweeney, Prince of Bannuch.

O'Dogherty, Prince of Innishowen.

The O'Boyles.

#### MUNSTER.

O'Sullivan, Prince of Bere and Bantry,

Daniel O'Sullivan Mor (The Great), whose father, Prince of Dunkerrin, was dispensed from taking part in the war, owing to his advanced age.

O'Connor, Kerry, Prince of Arachly.

Donagh McCarthy Mac Donagh, son of Cormac.

Dermot McCarthy Mac Donagh, son of Owen, both competitors for the principality of Alla.

O'Mahony of Carberry.

O'Donovan.

O'Donohue of Onachty.

O'Donohue of the Vale.

#### ANCIENT IRISH CHIEFTAINS WHO FOUGHT FOR FAITH AND FATHERLAND.

#### LEINSTER.

Although the chief heads of this province espoused the queen's cause and interests, there were, nevertheless, many noblemen of ancient clans to oppose them, and to take up arms in defence of their religion, of whom the most distinguished were :

The O'Byrnes.

The O'Tooles.

The Kavanaghs.

The O'Connors Faly.

The O'Mordhas, or O'Moraas, of Leix.



## CONNAUGHT.

O'Ruark, Prince of Breffny.  
Mac Dermott, Prince of Moylurg.  
O'Kelly, Prince of Mainek.  
Mac Geoghegans, princes.

In addition to the foregoing, we may give the names of the following, among other noblemen of English extraction, who made common cause with the Munster chieftains.

MUNSTER NOBLES OF ENGLISH EXTRACTION WHO SYMPATHISED WITH THE IRISH  
IN THEIR STRUGGLES FOR RELIGIOUS FREEDOM.

Roche, Viscount Fermoy.  
Richard Butler, Viscount Mountgarrett.  
Mac Morris, otherwise Fitz-Morris, Baron Lisnan.  
Thomas Butler, Baron Cahir.  
Prince Patrick Condon, Condon and Clongibbons.  
Richard Purcell, Baron Luochny.  
William Fitzgerald, Knight of Kerry, Lord of the Valley.  
Edmond Fitzgerald, The White Knight.

Besides the foregoing, who were in possession of their estates, and nobly risked them for conscience sake, there were others who, in addition to their risk, left the service of the Queen, and joined their lot with those Catholics struggling to be free. Among those were Florence and Daniel Mac Carthy, who were for a considerable time possessors of the principality of Clancanhoe.

O'Connor, Prince of Sligo.  
James Fitzgerald, Earl of Desmond.  
Mac William.  
Owen O'Morrha.  
Mac William Burke, Baron Leitrim.  
*Vide* O'Sullivan, "Cath. Historicus," Vol. III., Lib. II., Cap. 4.

Unfortunately, we have not authenticated particulars of the many battles fought during this fifteen years' war, except the few garbled and distorted reports which we find among the State Papers in the Record Office, and O'Sullivan's "Catholic History," which is very meagre; but enough can be gleaned from them to convince us that these nobles, with our forefathers, fought gallantly side by side, and made every sacrifice to defend the glorious old faith handed down to them from St. Patrick.

We also know that the inevitable result of the overwhelming odds pitted against them by Elizabeth, was the loss of their estates and all their worldly possessions; but against the retention of the holy faith, all the efforts of her hosts, and all the frauds, finesses, and legal chicanery of her unscrupulous agents were as nought. That, thank God, they retained unsullied, and transmitted it to us, to-day, pure and undefiled; sacred and inviolable.

"Thy rival was honoured, while thou wert wrong'd and scorn'd;  
Thy crown was of briars, while gold her brows adorned;  
She woo'd me to temples, while thou lay'st hid in caves;  
Her friends were all masters, while thine, alas! were slaves;  
Yet, cold in the earth at thy feet I would rather be,  
Than wed what I love not, or turn one thought from thee."

Our immortal bard has well conveyed in the lines above the love of our forefathers for their Church, and the temptations they had to resist, the deprivations they had to submit to, consequent upon their firm and unyielding determination to avoid the seductive enjoyments and blandishments of that new-fangled doctrine set up by their persecutors, and designated, forsooth, the "Reformation."

We find, in the year 1594, that Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne, the sworn enemy of the English, and young Edward Eustace, of the illustrious house of Baltinglass, rescued from the Castle of Dublin, after seven years' captivity, the following Irish noblemen, viz., young Hugh O'Donnell, Daniel MacSweeney (surnamed Gorm), Huan O'Gallachur, Henry and Art (the



sons of Shane) O'Neill, and Phillip O'Reilly. Having gained over the gaolers of the Castle prison, Feagh and Edward sent to the prisoners a piece of linen cloth, supposed to be for their personal use. This the prisoners cut into strips, and knotted them so firmly together as to form a rope, by means of which they were enabled to descend at midnight in safety, with the exception of Art O'Neill, who was so severely wounded by a stone falling upon him that he died shortly afterwards from its effects.

These noble captives, thus delivered from prison, quitted the city before break of day. It was the depth of winter, and the roads were in desperate condition, and in consequence of the circuitous route they had to travel, seeking all the bypaths and loneliest passes of the mountains in order to evade the enemy, they were almost exhausted by fatigue, hunger, and thirst, before they reached the sheltering welcome of Glenmalure. Here they received the kind and motherly nursing of Rosa O'Toole, wife of Feagh MacHugh, until they were able to make good their way to Ulster. The young Hugh O'Donnell, Prince of Tyrconnell, thus timely delivered from a gloomy fate, was one of the most powerful nobles of Ireland, next to O'Neill. He was named by the Irish, Bal Dearg O'Donnell. Although young, having barely attained his twentieth year, he had already distinguished himself in the exercise of warfare and field sports, and was alike remarkable for his prudence and virtue, and not less for his zeal in support of the holy Roman Catholic religion.

Upon his arrival at Tyrconnell, his father, who was now advanced in years, yielded up to him his rights, titles, and privileges, and he was, by the universal voice of a people who idolized him, proclaimed and crowned Prince of Tyrconnell.

Hugh was not long in rekindling the flames of war in Ulster, and this acted as a stimulant to the English of the Pale to renew their persecutions in Leinster; and again we find Walter Fitzgerald, Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne, Felim O'Toole, Tirlagh, Felim, and Raymond O'Byrne, sons of Feagh MacHugh, all once more united in having recourse to arms, and striking yet another blow for the old, old cause; and though victory

crowned their efforts on many a hard-fought field, the brute force of numbers told in the end, and many of the chieftains, amongst whom was Walter Fitzgerald, sacrificed their lives in the support of their religion.

The English Government at this period, wishing to enter into a negotiation with O'Neill and several of the other Catholic Confederate chieftains, effected a truce for about two months, *i.e.*, from 27th of October to the commencement of January. This is evidence in itself that the Irish were having the best of it, for then, as well as to-day, when the nefarious projects of the Government are progressing in accordance with their wishes, we find no inclination on their part for parley or conference; it is only when stern necessity points out to them that their action is likely to end in their own discomfiture that they ever dream of condescending to enter into the field of debate or argument with the Irish.

In the meantime the castle of Monaghan surrendered to Conn (son of O'Neill), aided by O'Donnell and MacMahon. When the time of truce expired, a commission was forwarded by the English Government to Sir Robert Gardiner and Sir Henry Wallop, empowering them to conclude a peace with the Catholics of Ulster. The commissioners engaged upon this mission lost no time in proceeding to Dundalk for the purpose, but the Irish, not having sufficient confidence in them, held a conference in an open plain in presence of the two armies, which were close by.

The Catholics demanded three points—first, general liberty of conscience; second, general pardon for the past; third, that there should be neither garrison, sheriff, nor any judicial officer in their province, except in the towns of Newry and Carrickfergus.

These articles not suiting the tastes of the English commissioners, the conference terminated without coming to any conclusion, notwithstanding the truce was prolonged to the 1st of April.

It having finally terminated, the deputy and General Norris hastened to join the army at Dundalk; but the jealousy which existed between them as to who should take the command led to their immediate disunion. The deputy, placing himself at the head of the troops, marched from Dundalk in expectation of making himself master of Armagh; but in this he



was foiled by the forces under O'Neill, who was accompanied by MacGuire, O'Cahan, and the two sons of O'Hanlon, and other noblemen.

The action which took place on this occasion between the rival armies commenced at Killeluona with equal ardour, and after a severe contest the English were forced to retreat upon Newry, leaving six hundred men slain upon the field, while the loss sustained by O'Neill did not exceed two hundred. The deputy's want of success in Ulster induced him to quit the province, and resigning the command of his troops to Norris, he returned to Dublin.

The Catholics of Leinster were again under arms. Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne, Felim O'Toole, and Donal Spaniagh (the Spaniard), chief of the Kavanaghs, united their forces, and ravaged the county of Dublin, and up to Wexford. The O'Connors did the same in O'Faley country. Connaught was in a state of combustion, the people there having been joined by a corps of Scotch, spreading terror all round them.

Russell, now lord deputy, marched an army into Connaught, and laid siege to the castle of Losmage, which belonged to O'Madden. When called upon to surrender, the assailants were indignantly answered—"that if their whole army was composed of deputies, it would not induce them to yield, nor lower their flag one inch." The castle, however, being weakly fortified, was, after a vigorous resistance, taken by the deputy, with the loss of about forty men. Again, in this year, 1596, the queen and council of England became desirous of establishing a peace with O'Neill, and with this end two commissioners, viz., General Norris, and Fenton, Secretary of State, were charged with the overtures.

They proceeded to Dundalk, where they had an interview with O'Neill; but that prince not having sufficient reliance in their good faith, and proposing as the first conditions the three points submitted on a former occasion, this, as well as former conferences, came to nought.

Shortly after Sir Edward Moore was despatched by Elizabeth with a pardon for The O'Neill, signed by the queen herself; and though lack of gallantry cannot be assigned to him, he upon this occasion was non-appreciative enough to refuse the epistle. A more welcome present arrived at

this juncture, in the shape of three small vessels laden with gunpowder, and having two hundred men on board, consigned to O'Donnell, from Spain, with a promise of much larger supply.

O'Neill wrote now to Fiach Mac Hugh O'Byrne, O'Toole, and other Leinster chieftains in terms of encouragement, exhorting them to as ably support him in the future as in the past, as allies in the common cause; and he received from them the most favourable replies. He likewise maintained a friendly understanding with the best disposed portions of the inhabitants of Munster; this he was enabled to do through the aid of Clan Shyhyes, whom he sent expressly into the province with letters of credit signed by himself.

O'Neill's letters to the nobles of Leinster produced a great effect. Fiach Mac Hugh immediately recommenced hostilities. He took the fortress of Bally-na-Cor and demolished its fortifications. He then, in conjunction with the O'Tooles, Kavanaghs, O'Moores, O'Connors, and Butlers, demanded, sword in hand, the immediate restoration of their several estates unlawfully forfeited; upon which, the deputy marched against them. The Butlers were pursued by the Earl of Ormond (who, after renouncing his religion, sacrificed his nearest relatives), while the O'Moores and O'Connors remained exposed to the insults of Sir Anthony St. Leger. Connaught, also, was not less disturbed, Richard Bingham being in arms against the Burkes, O'Rourkes, and the O'Tooles of Omey, in the west of that province, and it was in this conflict that Tiboid, or Theobald O'Toole, chief of his name then, was slain, A.D. 1596.

The King of Spain, knowing that the Queen of England had made many and frequent overtures to O'Neill, O'Donnell, and other Irish nobles who had recourse to arms in defence of their faith, sent them an express exhorting them to maintain a steady perseverance, and renewing his promises of material assistance.

In the interim Armagh was surprised by the English, who took up their quarters there. O'Neill was sore distressed at finding this holy town of Saint Patrick's own founding profaned by heretics, by whom nothing was held sacred. The English placed a strong garrison there,



and it was likewise protected by an army encamped near the town, under the command of General Norris.

The O'Neill, not conceiving it advisable to undertake a siege, made a movement with his army, which succeeded in its purpose of drawing off Norris, and causing him to give battle to Tyrone's forces, near the church of Killotir, where, notwithstanding the advantage of superior numbers in the English army, O'Neill's vigorous troops overpowered them, and drove them back upon Armagh, whither O'Neill followed them and put many to the sword.

Norris escaped, and leaving five hundred men in garrison at Armagh, in command of Francis Stafford, retired with the remainder of his army towards Dundalk.

O'Neill, who was now master of the situation, was enabled, from his position to intercept all convoys of provisions intended for Armagh, by which means a famine ensued, followed by a plague, which in a short time carried off many.

The English in Dundalk, having been apprised of the wretched condition of the garrison of Armagh, forwarded several waggons of provisions for its relief, under an escort of three companies of infantry and a squadron of dragoons. O'Neill being thoroughly informed of this manoeuvre, succeeded in surprising the convoy, putting every man of the escort to the sword, and his penetrating discernment enabling him to take advantage of all contingencies, favourable and otherwise, he advised and arranged the following *ruse de guerre*, which was attended with the most satisfactory results.

He ordered a portion of his command, both horse and foot, to equip themselves with the uniforms and appointments of the slain escort, and proceed with the supplies, in one body, with the English colours flying, towards the ruins of a monastery which stood within the range of the guns from the walls of Armagh.

O'Neill himself, at the head of the remainder of his forces, pursued this apparent English enemy, who made a feint of resistance, but at length giving way, sounded a retreat; all this under the eyes of Stafford, with

his garrison starving, and seeing the much coveted supplies about to vanish from before their very faces, was more than he could stand, so he ordered an immediate sally from the garrison to go to the support of their supposed countrymen.

With alacrity half of the garrison rushed out and hastened to the scene of the mimic battle, when, to their great dismay, they found not only O'Neill prepared to meet them, but the very men they came to succour charged them on all sides, while, to cap the climax of their misfortunes, Con, son of O'Neill, who, with some companies of infantry, had been lying in ambush in the monastery, took them in the rere. The English, thus hemmed in by enemies upon all sides, were cut to pieces in sight of the remainder of the garrison; and Stafford, finding himself without any further resource, surrendered to O'Neill, who gave him liberty to go join the English army at Dundalk, and recount, for the delectation of his superior officers, how The O'Neill dished them out of Armagh.

O'Neill next made an attack upon the castle of Carlingford, in which he was unsuccessful, and then sent his son-in-law, Henry Oge O'Neill, with some troops into the English Pale for the purpose of creating a diversion in favour of the Catholics of Leinster, who were then under arms.

The continued tyranny and the base cruelties of Sir Richard Bingham at length disgusted the throne and the English Privy Council, and though they certainly were not over squeamish where the lives and properties of the Irish were concerned, still, they were forced to "draw the line" at Bingham, and dismiss this monster of iniquity from the governorship of Connaught, replacing him by Sir Conyers Clifford.

The art of fortification being but little understood, they were obliged to make up for their lack of engineering skill by having a larger number of men, and for this reason O'Neill evacuated Armagh and Portmore, which were immediately taken possession of by General Norris, who garrisoned them, and appointed Sir Henry Davis to the command of the former.

Norris endeavoured to make further inroads, but was again stopped by O'Neill, whom he found encamped in his road, and occupied his troops



in constructing a field work, which has since been called Mount Norris, and is situated in the barony of Fews, between Armagh and Newry.

It was some time, owing to the frequent attacks made by O'Neill, before the fortification was finished, but being at length completed, it was garrisoned by Norris, who, after appointing General Williams to the command, returned with the remainder of his army to Dundalk. During his absence, however, he lost all the places he had taken; Mount Norris, Portmore, and Armagh surrendered again to O'Neill, who sent the different garrisons home. In vain did Norris return to the charge, with all his combined forces; he was again completely routed by O'Neill at Malach Breac, in the territory of Orior. Norris, after having made three ineffectual attempts to rally his shattered forces, was himself severely wounded, and this was the last time he ever measured swords with O'Neill. The generals under O'Neill, particularly MacGuire, who was in command of the cavalry, distinguished themselves particularly upon this occasion.

In the month of May, 1597, one of those base, perfidious acts of treachery for which the Castle authorities have been such adepts in the past, as well as in our own day, was perpetrated by the lord deputy on Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne, who, in accordance with an understanding between O'Neill and himself, was in a quiescent state. Further negotiations had again been resumed between O'Neill and the English government, and Feagh was requested by O'Neill to remain quiet pending same, promising that no terms would be concluded between him and the English in which the interests of Feagh would not receive every attention.

Naturally honourable himself, and lulled into a false security by judging others from the standpoint of his own manliness, Feagh did not adopt those precautionary measures he would have done were he in what may be termed his normal condition, viz., at "daggers drawn" with the English of the Pale.

The deputy was not influenced by such a fine sense of honour or good faith; his creed was to get rid of a formidable enemy by any means, knowing full well that he would never be reprimanded by the English court for any violation of the law of treaties, or checked for any illegal

acts committed in his zeal for the compassing of the death of The O'Byrne.

The usual tactics were then employed, nor was the temptation of English gold left out, and we sorrowfully have to put on record, not without finding one base enough to succumb to its influence. One of Feagh's own followers betrayed him (a base hireling known to history as one Duff); and Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne, the illustrious chief of his clan, and the glorious defender of his creed and country, was stolen upon in the quiet enjoyment of his home, where he was taking a needed rest from his warlike occupation, in the fancied security of a truce, and there, in the presence of his family, ruthlessly slaughtered, his body hacked, and his venerable head sent as a trophy to the queen, that her grinning sycophantic courtiers might feast their eyes upon it; but when these sightless orbs were endowed with life not one among them would have dared to smile within the radius of their fiery glance.

We have entered more fully into the details of Feagh MacHugh's murder in the History of the Clan O'Toole, to which we would invite our reader, rather than tire him with their recapitulation here.

Feagh left two sons, Phelim and Raymond, who inherited their father's valour and zeal in the cause of their holy religion. Phelim left the command of their shattered clan and hopes to Raymond, while he repaired to Ulster to seek at the hands of O'Neill, the bosom friend and faithful ally of their butchered sire, some material aid that would enable them to strike a blow to avenge the base and bloody death to which he was subjected.

O'Neill received him with the utmost cordiality; he sincerely condoled with him on his sad loss, nor did he confine himself to that too-often worthless sympathy of the lips—no, O'Neill was far more practical. His sympathy took the tangible shape of three hundred and fifty tried warriors, good men and true, commanded by a nobleman of Leinster, Brian Riach O'Morra (O'Moore). These were given to Phelim, who was exhorted by O'Neill to make good use of them. He returned with them to the O'Byrne's country, and on his arrival there he proved to

O'Neill's comfort, his own satisfaction, and the utter consternation of the Saxon "land-grabbers," that those strong-handed sympathizers from Ulster were not thrown away upon him, as, aided by his own clan, they fell upon those who had taken possession of the estates of his father, and had no trouble in routing them out, as, after getting a taste of the quality of the stuff in store for them, they, after being thoroughly defeated in a few skirmishes, fled with their lives in their hands to the shelter of Dublin Castle.

After this Brian O'Morra determined to do a little campaigning on his own account; so to prevent his command getting rusty through inactivity, he marched his troops towards Lochgarra, in the County Wexford, pillaging the English everywhere he found them, and aided by four hundred Leinster auxiliaries, cut to pieces a large English force, sent out to intercept and defeat him.

After the death of the celebrated Rory O'More, who was slain in an engagement with the English, his two sons, Owen and Edmund, were placed under the protection of Phelim O'Byrne, who had them educated in a manner suitable to their birth and pretensions; and upon Owen attaining the age of twenty-one, he equipped him in good style, and sent him to Leix to support his rights in that quarter. His claims were at once acknowledged by the vassals of his father, and he was declared "The O'Moore," *i.e.*, the legitimate representative of the principality of Leix.

In 1599, as we are told by Camden, the affairs of Ireland had become most deplorable; rebellion was extending throughout the length and breadth of the island. "In rebellionem enim gens fere, universa proruperat." In fact, the English in Ulster were limited to the possession of a few strongholds, while a considerable portion of the Munster chieftains were up in arms.

The O'Byrnes, O'Tooles, O'Kavanaghs, Eustaces, O'Moores, and O'Connors, with others of the Leinster chieftains, had leagued with the MacGeoghegans and Terrels to support their rights.

The O'Ruarks, with some of the Burkes, and other powerful leaders



in Connaught, embraced the national cause, so that Elizabeth found herself upon the verge of losing all power and authority over the island. She had no longer any one capable of governing it. Marshal Bagenal had been killed; Richard Bingham, who had been sent over immediately to replace him, died soon after his arrival in Ireland. Norris, the governor of Munster, and St. Leger, the prefect of Leix, had perished by the avenging swords of the Irish Catholics. Lord Ormond was nominally commander of the queen's forces, but his ability as a general not corresponding with his loyalty, Elizabeth was obliged to consult her council upon the selection of a general more capable of suppressing the increasing disorders of the day.

Charles Blunt, Lord Baron Mountjoy, had been chosen by the majority of the council, when Richard, Earl of Essex, whose ambition was boundless, insinuated that Mountjoy was not a right or proper person to be empowered with such a command, he not having acquired sufficient experience in the art of war; his habits, moreover, being of too studious a nature. His lordship urged further, that it would be most advisable in the existing state of affairs in Ireland, to select a commander from amongst the richest of the nobility of England, one who had previously commanded an army, and who would be a favourite with the troops, thereby evidently bringing himself to notice as the fittest person for the office, and he was accordingly appointed Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.

Shortly after his arrival, the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles gained a signal victory over Sir Henry Harrington, whom Essex had appointed to the chief command, in the glens of Wicklow, at which defeat Essex was so exasperated that to punish the cowardice of the English troops who were engaged in it, he caused them to be decimated. We have shown in the History of the Clan O'Toole that when Essex himself personally engaged the Irish he fared little better at their hands, and the account of his downfall, recall, and death, are there recorded, and may prove of interest to our readers.

In the month of December, A.D. 1600, Lord Mountjoy, who had succeeded the Earl of Essex as lord deputy, entered the County Wicklow,

for the purpose of chastising the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles for the frequent incursions made by them upon the lands in the vicinity of Dublin.

After having vainly endeavoured to surprise Phelim O'Byrne in his own house, Mountjoy made prisoners of his wife and eldest son, devastated the country round, burning houses, granaries, etc., etc., and laying waste all before him. After garrisoning the towns of Tullagh and Wicklow, the lord deputy proceeded to Monastereven, subsequently to Trim and Mullingar, then to Athlone and Drogheda, from which latter place he took his departure for Dublin on the 26th of the following April, having previously ordered that troops should be marched to the several garrisons.

Upon his arrival in Dublin he received orders to invest Niall Garve O'Donnell with the principality of Tyrconnell, and Connor Roe MacGuire with that of Fermanagh, in preference to their duly constituted legitimate princes. Thus was Maguire recompensed for having made a prisoner of Cormac O'Neill, nephew of O'Neill, and the tanist of his clan.

This plan of establishing opposition or queen's chieftains in the clans was of more effect in ultimately promoting the queen's interests in Ireland than whole battalions of English soldiers could be. By supporting the interests of the collateral branches against the legitimate heads elected by their clans, the crown stirred up a division amongst them with respect to hereditary and elective rights to the chieftainship and property in land; and, to our sorrow and their disgrace, it must be acknowledged that some were found sufficiently cowardly and cringing to assist the crown in this disastrous policy. The queen's protégés were named the "Queen's Maguire," the "Queen's O'Donnell," etc., etc., to distinguish them from the legitimate chiefs.

The year 1603 is the time at which we fix the almost entire reduction of Ireland under the English yoke. A historian, in his remarks upon this subject, says:

"The English pride themselves upon the subjection of this kingdom, which was not effected until after four centuries of warfare, whilst they will not agree as to the conquest of England, the fate of which was decided in a single day at Hastings, by William the Conqueror." Do

they pretend that their consent was then a condition, without which the Duke of Normandy could not have reigned over them? It is this imagination which renders them more vain. The Irish had fought for their liberty, until the end of the reign of Elizabeth, their chiefs still had their troops in the field, they were awaiting fresh reinforcements from Spain, and only laid down their arms upon the terms of an advantageous capitulation. Such then is the pretended and much vaunted, so-called conquest of Ireland.

With regard to the immediate fortunes of the O'Byrnes, we quote here again the following communication from Lord Deputy Mountjoy to Sir George Carew. This is given already in the History of the Clan O'Toole, but as it equally effects the O'Byrnes we re-insert it:—

“Tradagh (Drogheda), 4th April, 1601. Phelim MacFeagh, having heard that others sped no better than he, and yet are desirous to come in, their countries being spoiled, seeing no hope to recover himself, hath made his submission to the Council of Dublin, and put in his pledges.”

“Phelim O'Toole of the Fartrie, and all thereabouts being now quiet, we shall have time the more freely to apply ourselves to the services of greater importance.”

No doubt Phelim adopted this course as a “dernier resort,” and also as being the most prudent one to take; no doubt he had his own mental reservations, and also hoped that when the present storm was lulled, he might be reinstated in his possessions. This time he was right in his surmises, as we find later on in the State Papers, that on the accession of James I, the following grant was made by royal letters to the O'Byrnes:—

“On the 25th March, 1604, Phelim O'Byrne, had granted to him, pursuant to the Privy Seal, dated 26th September, 1603, the towns and lands of Corballie, Ballinockin, Grenane, a moiety of Bally-Eustace, &c., &c., producing a rent of £100, payable by five tenants of said territory, Ranelagh, in money counted, or in cattle, at the selection of said tenants, in manner following: A good ox at 15s., a mutton at 2s., a hog at 4s. English—in lieu of divers Irish customs, callings, casualties, to the late Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne, belonging to said territory—all which were



the possessions of said Feagh, late of Ballinacor, slain in rebellion and under the King's lands, and right of the Crown."

We may well suppose that the brothers, who were now in possession of the patrimony of their father, were well satisfied to quietly enjoy the same, and to cultivate their paternal acres in peace. They had had enough of warfare, and by their manly and independent protest, maintained by their swords, had thus procured from King James, letters confirmatory of Elizabeth's grant to them of the estates held by their father. Naturally enough, they now longed for repose, and, trusting in the written word of two English monarchs, looked forward to the time when their children, and their children's children, would hold their inheritance safe, guarded by the Crown, in peace for ever.

And we must acknowledge, that so long as James lived they were not disturbed, although many attempts were made by his followers, who hungered after the estates of them and other outlawed Irish chieftains. The plantation of the six northern counties acted as a powerfully appetizing tonic on the land hunger of the needy Scotch and English adventurers, who hung around the council chambers at Whitehall, or the halls of Dublin Castle. The good luck of their friends in the North caused them to turn their anxious eyes upon, and set their greedy and covetous hearts longing for the possession of the estates of the Leinster chieftains as well.

There is not on record (and there is no lack of them) a more flagitious and diabolical scheme than that adopted for the purpose of ousting the brothers O'Byrne out of their properties. Begun in 1625, it was consummated in 1628, by the joint machinations of the renegade Lord Esmond and Sir William Parsons, who employed the most wicked devices and the basest means that the devil himself could inspire or suggest, to effect their purpose.

The official documents which we give in this sketch, anent this particular plot, will show that the exterminators of our own day, even the very worst of them, were angels of mercy when compared with the two execrable villains we have named above; and when we consider that the

O'Byrne's case may be taken as an index for what was occurring on the estates of many another Irish chieftain, we can form in our own minds a pretty correct opinion of the purity of the original source from which some of the landed proprietors of the present day deduce their sacred, inalienable rights to the soil, and who so loudly cry out robbery and communism if the rightful owners—the poor peasantry—the descendants of these same robbed and defrauded chieftains—have the hardihood to even demur against the starvation and exterminations to which they have been so long and so cruelly subjected. Well may they cry out :

“Tu quosque ! Domine ! Tu quosque.”

Although active operations were not openly carried on until James I. passed away, we have quite enough of proof to show that the scheme was “a-brewing,” as we find in the following State paper :—

February 20th, A.D. 1617.—“The king's warrant for a grant to Sir Patrick Maule. On request made on behalf of the freeholders of the Byrnes' country (Wicklow), the surrenders of their land have been accepted, and grants made in fee-farm (notwithstanding the royal title to many parcels of the land).

“As the inhabitants pleasinge themselves with their barbarous customs of tanistry and gavelkind, and their petty cavills impede the reducing of that country to that civility which other parts of that kingdom have embraced. We have thought good to quicken them to passe their lands, by demanding our right to their intrusions, concealed wardships, fines for alienations without licence, meane proffetts, releefs, summes of money for respite of homage. Sir Patrick Maule having offered to discover things of that nature in the O'Byrne country, and in Glencap in the O'Tooles' country, and to make the title of them good to us—‘three parts out of four’—all the benefit that shall be made thereof is bestowed on him. He further orders : ‘A grant to be made out to Sir P. Maule, and a warrant to be given to the Lord Chancellor to issue commissions, to inquire of the premises in the said territories, and to command that the Barons of the Exchequer, Bar, His Majesty's Counsel, and all the other officers and ministers are to assist Sir P. Maule, and before any letters patent be passed

of any lands in the said territories, the composition shall be first made by the possessors for their intrusions, after which the discharge may be given to the inhabitants."

Here we have an example of the anxious desires of the followers of the king to get the lands of the O'Tooles and O'Byrnes, and the intrigues and foul devices which they used in order to succeed in their unjust project. In the above they only pretended to take possession of the lands forfeited by the O'Byrnes and O'Tooles by the non-observance of the unjust laws, but this was a mere cloak, the thin end of the wedge, as subsequent events fully establish. We have here, too, pretty tangible proof of that vaunted purity of the unsullied ermine of the judicial bench, and how indignantly it is repudiated that they could at any time be guided or led by any Castle hints, but the impartial reader can glean sufficient from the "command to the Barons, Bar, and K.C.'s" of that day how they were supposed to act, and "verbum sap."

We find, further on, Lord Falkland, the new lord deputy, anxious to signalize his term of office, with repeating the Ulster plantation process in the O'Byrne and O'Toole country.

He is reported to have suggested to the Privy Council:

May 23rd, A.D. 1623.—"Not twenty miles from Dublin, the territories Ranelagh, Imayle, Glengap, Cosha, part of the Byrnes' country, Shillelagh and the Duffrys, should be transplanted as was Ulster;" and in order to have a pretext to act on, and authority for acting, we find him writing to one Conway in a short time afterwards.

He requests him to let his majesty "know that he is in pursuit of a dangerous conspiracy, which seems to have spread itself in Lower Leinster, as far as from the Wyndegates, in Wicklow, to Ross, in Wexford, about by the walls of Kilkenny, into the Townesend of Carlogh, amongst those foure nations, as they term themselves—The Butlers, the Birnes, the Cavanaghs, and the Tooles.

"Of the Birnes, two of Phelim Macpheagh's sons are accused, the eldest and the youngest, Bryan and Tirlogh, the most civilly bred of all his sons. He has them both in Dublin Castle, and pregnant proofs





The Vale of Ovoca.





against them, though both of them stand stiffly to the denial, but that is no argument of their innocence."

Whether Sir Pat Maule and the lord deputy succeeded in their little plot to the acme of their nefarious designs, we cannot say, but one thing is certain, that the O'Byrnes were despoiled and robbed of their estates, and sent adrift on the world, as the following extract from Carte's\* "Ormond" clearly proves:—

"One case in truth was very extraordinary, and contains in it such a scene of iniquity and cruelty that, considered in all its circumstances, it is scarce to be paralleled in the history of any age or country.

"Pheagh MacHugh O'Byrne, lord of the O'Byrnes' country, now called Ranelagh, in the County of Wicklow, having been killed in arms towards the latter end of the reign of Elizabeth, she, by her letters patent to Loftus and Gardiner, then lords justices, directed letters to be made out for Phelim MacPheagh to his eldest son, to leave to him and his heirs the countries and possessions of which his father died seized.

"King James coming to the crown not long after, and in the beginning of the reign gave the like directions for passing the said inheritance to Phelim. This Sir Richard Graham, an old officer of the army, endeavoured to obstruct, and in order thereunto sued out a commission, directed to Sir Wm. Parsons and others, to inquire into the said lands, and upon the inquisition they were found to be the inheritance of Pheagh MacHugh O'Byrne, father of Phelim, and were then in Phelim MacPhelim's possession.

"King James thereupon, by a second letter, directed that Ranelagh and all the lands whereof Phelim MacPheagh and Bryan, his son and heir, were then seized, should be passed to them and theirs by letters patent. In consequence whereof another office was taken, on which the lands were found as in the former. The first office was not yet filled, Sir Richard Graham having opposed it, and by his interest and the credit

\* Carte was a distinguished divine of the Protestant Church, and therefore not likely to exaggerate in favour of the O'Byrnes. Had he any prejudices, we should expect them to tend to shield the English. See his "Life of Duke of Ormond," 1735-6.—Ed.



of a general book which he produced, he got the possession of part of Phelim's lands in virtue of a warrant from the lord deputy.

"Sir James Fitzpiers-Fitzgerald attempted likewise to get another part of them passed to him upon the like authority, but Bryan, the son in whose possession they were, complaining of it at the council table, Sir James's patent was stayed.

"Encouraged by this success, Bryan applied himself next to the king for redress against Sir Richard Graham, complaining that, contrary to his majesty's letters patent, part of his lands had been passed to the said Richard Graham. King James ordered the cause to be heard in the council board in Ireland and certificate to be made of the truth.

"At the hearing Sir Richard Graham alleged that the lands were the inheritance of certain freeholders, and not of Phelim nor his ancestors, and a commission was ordered for examining witnesses upon this fact. The council certified the king of their proceedings, and Sir Richard Graham, or an agent duly authorized by him, were required to repair into England. Sir Richard sent his son, William, who thought to get Bryan's appeal dismissed by the help of the Duke of Buckingham, and preferred a petition to the king, which the duke seconded. But the Duke of Richmond being present and knowing the case, acquainted his majesty with the true state of the matter.

"The king thereupon referred the hearing and determining of it to the two dukes, who appointed Sir Dudley Norton, Sir Francis Annesley, Sir Henry Bouchier, and Mr. Richard Hardress, one of the king's learned counsel for the affairs of Ireland, to hear the matter and certify the facts.

"When the case was heard before them, Sir William Parsons produced a book before them (a book written by himself); this was calculated to prove the lands in question to be the inheritance of freeholders, contrary to the office which had been found before Sir William himself and the other office which had been taken (as is said above) in virtue of the second letter of King James.

"The commissioners giving more credit to those offices than to Sir

William's book, Mr. Graham and he (Sir W.), seeing the matter was likely to go in favour of Phelim, started an objection, which effectually prevented a final determination of that suit. It was a far fetch indeed, and one that could not fail of success, for they undertook, with the assistance of Lord Esmonde and Redmond MacPheagh, to entitle the king to the lands, or the general part of them, and to prove that they were really vested in the crown. This immediately stopped proceedings on the part of the commissioners, who would give no sentence in the case where the crown was concerned, the right whereof they had no authority to determine.

“The propositions for the benefit and service of the prince are always favourably received, and a commission was early obtained, empowering Sir William Parsons and others to inquire of the said lands. Bryan acquainting the Duke of Richmond of this, his Grace wrote himself to the lord deputy, and engaged the king and council of England to send directions to him to stay the commission; notwithstanding which the commissioners went on with it, and an office was found that all the said lands were the inheritance of Pheagh MacHugh, Phelim's father, who died in rebellion.

“But as Queen Elizabeth had afterwards granted them to Phelim and his heirs, and the king had confirmed the same by his letters patent, the finding of this office need not have hindered the passing of them to Phelim and Bryan, who were by these letters entitled to Pheagh's whole inheritance.

“This, however, could not be obtained, the lands being intended to pass into other hands. Bryan acquainted the king with these proceedings and intentions, and got his majesty's letters to lord deputy and lord chancellor of Ireland, directing that none of the said lands should pass, by letters patent, lease, or otherwise, till the matter was heard at the council table in England.

“It happened unluckily for Bryan that the Duke of Buckingham had left for Spain before Sir Dudley Norton and the other commissioners

had made their report, and was so taken up after his return that he could not meet the Duke of Richmond to settle and decide the affair; but he had a much greater misfortune in the sudden death of Richmond, which happened soon after, and left Phelim and Bryan without a patron in the court of England.

“Their enemies soon turned this to their own advantage, and Sir William Parsons got the lord deputy’s warrant to the sheriff of Wicklow, to put him in possession of their lands. The sheriff accordingly gave Sir William possession of that part which Phelim enjoyed, but Bryan still kept the other part, which was in his own hands. Lord Esmonde thereupon sent for him, and would have him refer the matter to his decision, which Bryan declined, knowing that his lordship was a confederate of his adversary, as appeared afterwards, when that same lord and Sir William Parsons shared the lands between them. This refusal Lord Esmonde resented, and Sir William Parsons afterwards sued Bryan in the Exchequer for the lands of which he still retained possession, but his bill was dismissed. Lord Esmonde, however, persisted in troubling him for these very lands, but Bryan, maintaining his rights, he and his brother, Tyrlagh, were, by the practices of their adversaries, committed close prisoners to Dublin Castle on March 13th, 1625, upon the informations of Thomas Archer, Dermot M’Griffin, Cahir M’Edmond, MacArt, and Edmond Duffe, all three of the name of Kavanagh. This last had plundered one of Phelim’s tenant’s houses, and carried off the man’s wife and cows. Phelim being a justice of the peace and of the quorum, upon his tenant’s complaint, issued a warrant to apprehend Duffe, who fled first into Carlow, from thence into Kilkenny, where he was apprehended, and then, by way of revenge and to save his own life, accused Bryan and his brother, Tyrlagh.

“Archer did not so readily submit his evidence. He was first miserably tortured, put naked on a burning gridiron, and burned with gunpowder, and at last suffered the strapado until he was forced to accuse the two brothers, and then he obtained his pardon.

“Dermot M’Griffin and Cahir MacArt were afterwards executed at



Kilkenny, and declared at the hour of death that they had accused Bryan and Tyrlagh Byrne falsely.

“Such were the witnesses that deposed against them; yet, upon their information, two bills were preferred against them, and several grand juries in the County of Carlow, not finding the bills, were prosecuted in the star chamber and fined.

“The two brothers, however, were still kept close prisoners till the 20th August following, when Tyrlagh was enlarged on bail to appear in ten days’ warning, and Bryan was allowed the liberty of the prison. This still disabling him from taking care of his affairs, he petitioned the council, who, referring the matter to Lord Aungier and the Lord Chief Justice, Bryan was set at liberty on Christmas Eve, but bound to appear in court the first day of the next term. He appeared accordingly, and nothing was alleged against him, yet the Lord Chief Justice was for binding him over to the term following. Bryan opposed this, urging that it was the motion of his old adversaries, and intended only to keep him from following his business, and desired he might be bound over to appear in Michaelmas term, which would give him time to go to England and prosecute his affairs there.

“This was still thought too much liberty for a man to enjoy who was supported in his cause by two letters, which King Charles, by the advice of his Privy Council and Committee of Irish affairs, had sent over to the lord deputy for passing the lands of Phelim and his son; but the great person who got possession of them, still found means to prevent the effect of these letters.

“And therefore a new prosecution was set on foot, and Bryan and Tyrlagh, appearing on summons, were again, on November 2nd, 1627, committed close prisoners to the castle of Dublin, loaded with irons, without any diet from his Majesty, or leave for any friend to visit or relieve them, even in the presence of the constable or his son.

“This was done upon the information of Art Mac Cahir Kavanagh, who, being condemned at Carlow Assizes, was prevailed with to accuse the two brothers, but being afterwards executed there to his sentence, he

declared at his execution to the sheriff (Mr. Patrick Esmonde), Lord Esmonde's brother, that he had accused them falsely, and desired him to certify the deputy of it; their adversaries, however, resolved to go on, and involve the three other brothers, and their father Phelim, in the same common accusation of relieving and keeping company with one Murrough Baccagh Cavanagh, who had for his crimes been banished for seven years, and returning before the term expired, was killed in making resistance against those who attempted to arrest him for contempt in returning—but yet was under the king's protection—so that it was neither treason nor felony to speak to him, neither had Phelim nor his son ever known or seen the man; yet, this in defect of another, was to serve for the matter of their accusation; probably because it best suited the witnesses who were to be suborned, and being of a private nature was the less liable to be refuted.

“Phelim and his sons had been zealous in apprehending Brian Kavanagh (Murrough Baccagh's brother) and two others concerned with him in the murder of Mr. Ponte, for which they were executed, which rendered it not very likely that Phelim should correspond familiarly or criminally with Murrough—but naturally enough led people to think that the latter's relations might, out of a spirit of revenge, be the more easily drawn to swear anything that would do mischief to the former, especially when it would be the means of saving their own lives. Lord Esmonde had then in prison one of Murrough's nephews, who was with his uncle when he was killed and had been in rebellion.

“He (Lord Esmonde) sent this man to Dublin to accuse Phelim and his sons, which the threats of being hanged, and the promises of life and pardon, prevailed upon him to do. James McElife, brother-in-law to Bryan Murrough Cavanagh, was made use of for the same purpose. One Notter, a notorious thief, had been prosecuted so hard by Phelim for stealing cows and five garrons from his tenants, that he was forced to fly the County Wicklow, where two indictments for those thefts were found against him; and being afterwards condemned for robbery in the North, he was sent back to Dublin to purchase his life by accusing Phelim and his sons, for which he was likewise rewarded with apparel and other necessities.

Gerald MacFerderough, brother-in-law to Shane Bane (who, being in rebellion, was apprehended by Phelim's son, Hugh, and executed), had been at the last assizes prosecuted by Phelim, for robbing his house, and being put in irons in the Castle of Dublin for another crime which he confessed, was yet to join in due accusation. Edmond Duffe had been prosecuted by Mrs. Wolverton, Phelim's daughter, and condemned for burglary. He was afterwards carried to the gallows, and being ready to be turned off, promised to accuse Phelim, and was saved from execution. Lisagh Duff MacLochlin, a common thief, had, at the Wicklow assizes, upon the prosecution of Luke Byrne, Phelim's nephew, been condemned for stealing a horse, but upon becoming an accuser, was set free.

"Such were the witnesses made use of in this affair, none of whom were produced in person, and yet it was resolved to find a bill against Phelim and his five sons, at Wicklow assizes, upon which (as the men could only speak Irish) their evidence was taken on Sir Henry Belling's and Mr. Graham's interpretation. The Lord Chief Justice, upon most of the cases, expressed doubts whether the jury could credit or not, upon which Sir Henry Belling pressed him to sign the bill, and said that he would undertake that the jury should find it.

"Proper means, indeed, were taken for it, and Lord Esmonde had got Piers Sexton, who had married his niece, and was a tenant to Sir Wm. Parsons, to be made High Sheriff for the job, although he had no such freehold as would by statute qualify him for that office. A grand jury was empanelled; Sir James Fitzpiers-Fitzgerald, a mortal enemy of Phelim and his family, and who had a promise of part of Phelim's estates, or an equivalent in lieu thereof, was foreman of the grand jury, though he had no land in the country. Sir Henry Belling, who had actually got possession of the said estates, was the second, most of the rest were not freeholders, and all of them were allied to, or dependent on, Lord Esmonde, Sir William Parsons, and others who had interests in Phelim's estates.

"'Tis no wonder that such a jury found a bill, which was followed two days after by the death of Phelim's wife, who expired of grief to see



her husband's and children's lives and fortunes put into such hands, and exposed to such imminent danger. She was buried in Wicklow, and her body dug up three days afterwards.

"Though the grand jury had found the bill, yet other witnesses were necessary for the trial of the parties, and Sir Henry Belling, who never stuck at any practice, however execrable, to carry his point, and William, son of Sir Richard Graham, who had got into possession of some of Phelim's estates of Cosh, undertook the finding of them.

"They were both of them Provost Marshals, and exerted all the power of their posts for that purpose. 'Tis almost incredible what a number of persons they took up and detained in prison for weeks and months together, soliciting them all the while with promises of reward, and threats of hardship, even of death itself, to accuse the gentlemen whose inheritance they wanted to seize. Some they put on the rack, others were tried and condemned by martial law, at a time when the courts of justice were sitting. Some of the latter, who were executed in Dublin, as Shane O'Toole, Lachlin O'Clary, Cahir Glassey (O'Toole), and his brother, declared at their death, in the hearing of thousands, that they were executed because they could not accuse Phelim and his sons; and similar declarations were made by others who suffered in the country.

"Some friends of the persecuted gentlemen, learning by how infamous and detestable methods their lives and estates were attacked, made application on their behalf to the king and council of England, with such success that a commission was sent over to inquire into the affair. The chief of these friends who thus interposed was Sir Francis Annesley, afterwards Lord Mount Norris; and this (as far as I can find) seems to me the only ground of imputation, laid upon him by a noble historian, of being an enemy to the deputies of Ireland, and attacking them for their administration as soon as they left the Government.

"The commission was directed to the Lord Primate of Ireland, the Lord Chancellor, the Archbishop of Dublin, the Lord Chief Justice, and Sir Anthony Savage, who sat on it day after day for a fortnight together, in the latter end of November and the beginning of December, 1628,

taking the depositions of a great number of witnesses ; wherein the truth of the above-mentioned circumstances of this prosecution fully appeared by the testimony of Mr. William Eustace, of Castlemartyr (father of Sir Maurice Eustace, afterwards Lord Chancellor), and other unexceptional persons. This restored the gentlemen to their liberty, though not to their estates, a considerable part whereof, particularly the Manor of Carrick, in the Ranelagh, which had been, during their imprisonment, passed to Sir William Parsons by a patent dated the 4th of August, 1628."

Comment upon this long extract from Carte would be superfluous. We would merely remind our readers to note well its source. This is not the venomous, bitter outpourings of one of the homeless O'Byrnes, smarting under his bitter wrongs, neither is it the language of a writer with Irish blood in his veins and warm Irish sympathies pulsating through his heart ; no, it is the cool, measured language of a clergyman of the new English faith, whose honesty of purpose cannot be doubted, and to whom all the greater credit is due for being able to rise superior to those prejudices of class and country that so sadly warp the minds and darken the judgment of his fellow-countrymen, when poor Ireland is the subject of their thoughts or the topic of their argument.

Apologizing for this digression, which the robbery and infamy, so concisely put by Carte, has extracted from us, we now take up the sad fortunes of Phelim and his five sons after their being snatched, as it were, from the jaws of an ignominious death.

By this patent Parsons and his corrupt confreres obtained what they long sought. True, it would have been far more congenial to the taste of Lord Esmonde and Sir William if Phelim and his five sons had been turned off the drop some fine morning from the scaffold of Dublin Castle ; there would be less chance of their ever turning up to trouble them again ; but, as it was, they had reason to feel grateful for the broad lands placed in their possession.

This wholesale robbery threw Phelim, in the evening of his life, together with his five sons and their families, landless and homeless on the broad waves of the world. Phelim did not survive it long ; the

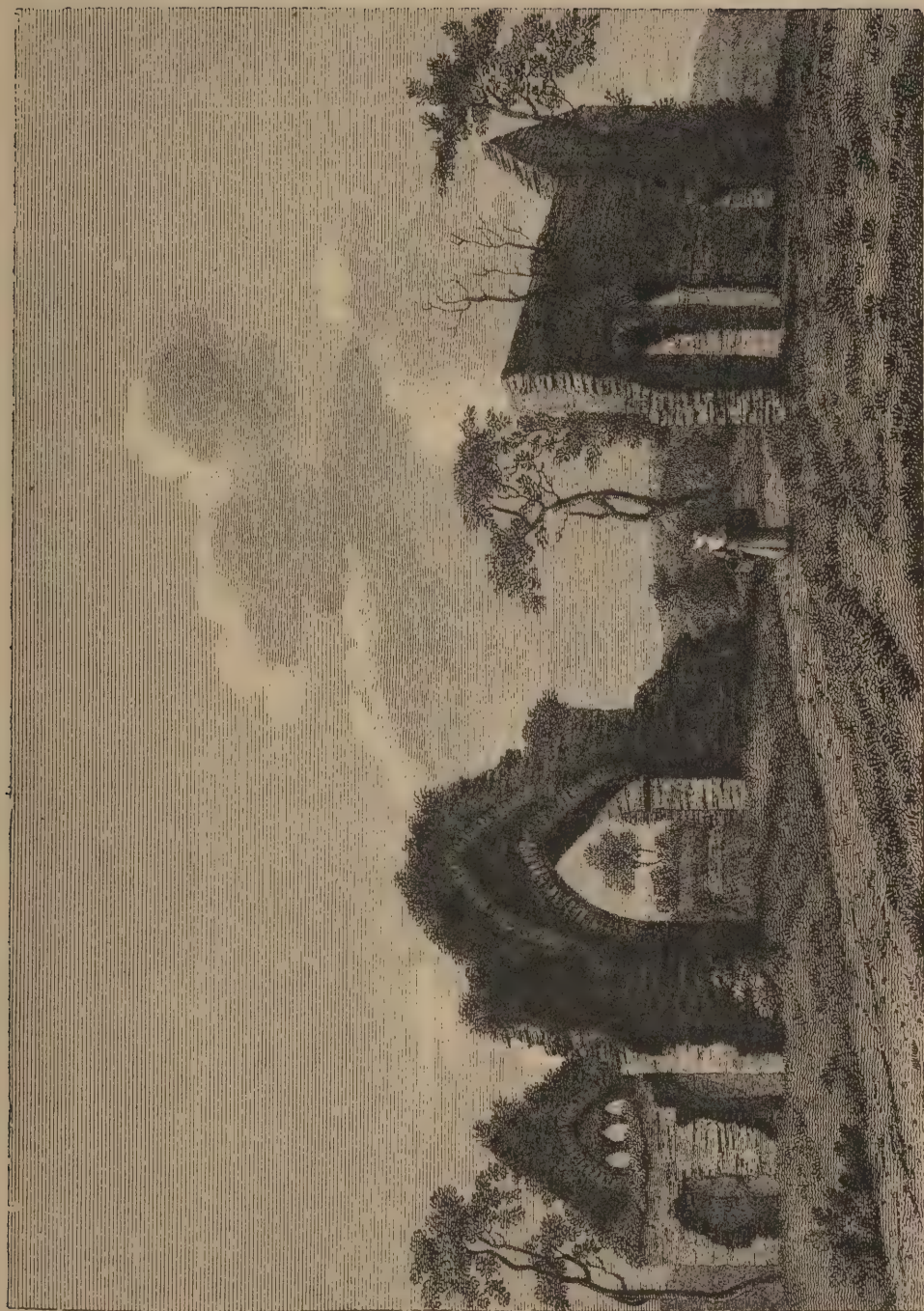
weight of years and the accumulated misfortunes of his house were too many for him, and he died broken-hearted a short time after, in 1630, leaving his sons nothing but the bitter remembrance of his and their wrongs. The two eldest went to the Continent, where they took service in the army of Spain, returning to strike yet another blow for holy Ireland, when Owen Roe unfurled the green flag once again in the Catholic Rebellion of 1641. The other three remained at home, and settled down amongst their clansmen and friends as ordinary members of the farming class, having to share the same fate as their old allies, the O'Tooles, were driven to, by similar reprehensible measures, a short time before.

From these, as well as from the other children's children of Feagh MacHugh, many of the O'Byrnes of the present day are descended, while another lineal descendant of Feagh's was a Franciscan Friar.

We find by an inquisition, taken ten years after the O'Byrnes' property had been fraudulently passed to Parsons and others, *i.e.*, in the year 1638, at Wicklow, and now to be seen in the Rolls of Chancery, that "the O'Byrnes' country was found to consist of the Baronies of Newcastle, Arklow, and Ballinacor, and the territory of Shilelagh, in the County of Wicklow, and all of which adjoins the County of Wexford, nearly half the country on the seaside."

We have now little more to say of the Clan O'Byrne as warriors and chieftains; their power was broken and their estates in the hands of the hated stranger; the few holdings that they continued to possess in the reigns of James and Charles were wrested from them by the rapacious Cromwell, who, with a fiendish malevolence, put every one that offered the slightest resistance to the sword. Nor did the chivalry of his psalm-singing plunderers spare the old and feeble; the women and the children of the garrisons and towns, all fell victims to his wrath. And with brutal ferocity, those who were not actually caught with arms in their hands were exiled and transported as slaves, while their broad acres and domains were handed over to his hireling soldiery, the ancestors of a great many of those rack-renting landlords of our day, who so loudly





Wicklow Abbey.

Founded in the reign of Henry III. by the O'Tooles and O'Byrnes for Conventual Franciscan Friars. It is situated in the town. Here the Fitzgeralds, in 1178, erected a strong fortress, called the Black Castle. In 1301 it was taken and burned by the O'Tooles and O'Byrnes. In 1533 the O'Byrnes submitted to Henry VIII., by indenture, and granted him the town and castle of Wicklow. It was retaken in 1580 by the O'Tooles and the Feagh McHugh O'Byrnes; but, in 1642, Sir Charles Coote marched with an army from Dublin and defeated them, and drove them into the mountains. It was retaken again by the O'Tooles, under Colonel Luke O'Toole, of Castle Kevin, in 1646, but recaptured by Cromwell in 1649, and remains ever since in ruins.

The above view was taken from an original drawing, by J. G. Brien, 1792, in the collection of the Right Honourable W. Cunningham.

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complain that the tenantry (descendants of the original owners) are even allowed to exist on the lands legitimately their own.

A full history of the Clan O'Byrne must be written by hands more competent than ours, and whoever undertakes it will find ample material in the "State Papers," in the "Records of Continental Armies," especially Mr. O'Callaghan's "Irish Brigade," in the "History of the Irish Civil Wars;" all going to show that the descendants of Feagh MacHugh O'Byrne, whether at home or abroad, on battle-field or in council chamber, were worthy inheritors of the fame and chivalry of their ancestors.

It is surpassingly strange that, notwithstanding all England did in the past to annihilate the Clan O'Byrne, they are still more numerous at home and abroad than any other Irish family; instances in the proof are, that at home, among their own lofty mountains and verdant valleys, they are able to return a Member of Parliament, and one of their own name, too, against the combined votes of every other name in the same constituency; while abroad, in the city of New York alone, there are upwards of five thousand of the name. In this respect their old allies, the O'Tooles, are not so numerous, and our readers will remember that we showed the reason why in these pages, as the O'Tooles, from their proximity to the Castle of Dublin, had, through all the earlier centuries of the Battles of the Pale, to stand the first, and therefore the heaviest, brunt of the English attack; and although they repaid all these polite attentions, and sometimes with usurious interest, their own ranks were being constantly decimated in the eternal struggle.

The O'Byrnes have never been backward in the several patriotic movements which have taken place in their country from time to time since they lost their property. When Ireland called they were always amongst those who answered: "Ready—ay, ready;" whether the movement involved a long pike and a bloody shroud in 1798, or the stoical indifference to Balfour's prison cell in 1888, they gave their aid to one as cheerfully as the other.

In the rebellion of 1798 their clan was well and nobly represented,



and in an especial manner by Billy Byrne of Ballymanus, whose deeds are well known in connection with the history of that unhappy period, and who died, as many of his clan and kindred before him, a "traitor to the crown."

Again, in 1803, in the attempt made by Robert Emmet, the O'Byrnes were also well represented by young Anthony Byrne, of Hamilton Lodge, Rathdangan, who, as a captain with Michael Dwyer, led the Wicklow men across the mountains to aid Emmet in his intended rising and attack on the castle; but when, on their arrival at Rathfarnham, they found the attempt had been made before the time appointed, and turned out a fiasco, they immediately returned to their homes "'till the storm is over."

The whole county of Wicklow was being well scoured by the military, living with, and billeted on, the respectable people of the district, until their exactions and the licentiousness of their conduct had again nearly ruined the people, and driven them to desperation.

A company of them, billeted on Hugh Byrne, of Hamilton Lodge,\* Anthony's father, passing in and out every day, little suspected that under the flagstone at the door, over which they passed, was a complete suit of green belonging to Anthony, safely hid there, until an opportunity would arise of wearing it on the battle-field, at the head of his men, in the face of the English foe.

Many incidents are related by Dr. Madden, in his "Life of Captain Michael Dwyer," the outlaw chief of the Wicklow mountains, in which Anthony O'Byrne figures. One of them in particular, in which he saved Dwyer, is worth relating here.

Dwyer was to attend Mass at Kilamoate on the next Sunday morning. The yeomen came to know it, and resolved to be there themselves

\* This was Hugh O'Byrne's residence since he was driven from Cornaun, on the brow of Keegen Mountains (ante, 1798), where some of the family live still; namely, the descendants of Hugh's brother, Edward.

We also find that this same Cornaun was the residence of another Hugh O'Byrne (son of Phelim M'Pheagh), as it is given down in the outlawries of 1641. ....

for the purpose of arresting him. Accordingly, they arrived at the chapel while the divine ceremony was being celebrated, and so arranged their party as to guard all the doors and every possible means of exit.

Anthony Byrne at once saw into the desperate state of the case, and resolved by stratagem to baffle the yeos, and save Dwyer. He whispered Dwyer to remain quiet, and to hide himself amongst the congregation, particularly among the women, who all wore long, ample cloaks, the adopted dress of that day.

As soon as the congregation began to leave, Anthony and a few other young men were to feign an escape up the mountain, and when they should be half way up, the companions left behind for that purpose, watching them, as it were, with momentous anxiety, were to shout out : "There they go !" "There they are !" "There goes Dwyer first !" "More power, captain !" These, with loud shouts of joy at the apparent escape of Dwyer, so deceived the yeos that they started off in hot pursuit up the steep sides of Kegeen mountain. Anthony led them a gallant run, until, finding at length that the yeomen's horses were closing on them, they sat down and waited until they came up. Needless to say that, when the baffled yeomen found that Dwyer was not among them, and that they were, in modern parlance, "sold," their ejaculations were of a nature more vehement than prayer-like.

"Who are you, and what's your business ?" demanded their leader in stentorian tones, to which Byrne made answer : "Anthony Byrne, of Hamilton Lodge ; looking after our sheep, which have strayed away." "Yes ; we understand," said the yeomen, and they came down the hill again.

In a rage at being so nicely duped ; looking crest-fallen, discomfited, and chagrined, they returned to the chapel, not to find Captain Dwyer, who, we may be sure, availed himself of the first opportunity to escape from what must have been to him, though a safe, a rather undignified place of concealment.

The writer of these pages (some twenty years ago) happened to meet an old man from that part of Wicklow, named Tibbot O'Toole.

He was a remarkably fine old man, upwards of eighty years of age, of noble mien and majestic bearing ; simple and humble as a child withal. We asked him if he knew Hugh Byrne, of Hamilton Lodge, Rathdangan?

"Indeed, I did," he replied ; "and his sons, too. They were like Christian Brothers, they were so pious ; and each of them used to play a different musical instrument, and were most entertaining. I also knew their sisters. Two of them were nuns in the world ; and I remember," said he, "one of those sisters dying (oh ! it was long before Boney's war), and all the young girls for miles round about the country came to the funeral, all dressed in white. They walked in procession, singing hymns, and carrying the coffin in a sheet covered with bouquets of flowers. Such a sight was not seen in the country since or before. They buried her in Cranerin, near where I lived.

"But you must know," added Tibbot, "that they were the real O'Byrnes ; that they were the descendants of the great Feagh MacHugh ; they lost their lands because they would not conform to Protestantism. Hugh's father was Anthony O'Byrne, who was nephew to Byrne of Ballymanus, and son of Hugh of Derrybawn, Seven Churches, in which latter place he was interred ; his great-great-grandfather was Feagh Mac Hugh O'Byrne."

"But what became of Hugh's sons?" we inquired. "Well," answered our venerable informant, "John and Peter went to America, about twenty years ago, and their children, I am told, are well to do in one of the Western States, called Iowa ; and Anthony, the patriot, he got married to a Miss Metcalf, of Old Mile, near Donard, which took place shortly after the rebellion, and when the troubles of '98 and Emmet's attempt in 1803, had somewhat subsided, in both of which he took a conspicuous part, particularly in the latter, in conjunction with the renowned Captain Michael Dwyer, he settled down, and carried on business in Donard, where he was very successful as a general merchant, and amassed a fortune for his children.

"But the brethren of Orange Donard (as it was then called) never had any liking for Anthony. Opposite his house of business lived a



gentleman named Heighenton, where the Orangemen used to meet, and occasionally amuse themselves with a little ball practice at Anthony's expense, by firing in through his windows; but no one was ever killed by these shots.

"His son-in-law, Denis O'Toole, soon put a stop to that game when he got married to his daughter, Anne, after the old man's death. All the other children died unmarried, and Anne fell in for nearly the whole of Anthony Byrne's wealth; and it was a similar case with her husband, whose brothers and sisters also died young, their fortunes falling to Denis, the only survivor of seven. Denis was the terror of the Orangemen of Donard, and never stopped till he silenced them, and drove many of them out of the town.

"He got into trouble himself in 1848, with O'Brien and Mitchel; and an old lady of the Heighenton's could not sleep for the fear of him, as he was supposed to be the intended leader of the people of that district when the rebellion would break out.

"His house was searched, and all the firearms found carried off, and Government issued a writ for his arrest, which was not put into execution after Smith O'Brien and the others were transported. However, it was still hanging over him, and might be put into execution at any time; therefore, his friends at home and the uncles of his wife in America, joined in advising him to leave the country for a while, and go out to them, where he could have freedom and plenty of land for nothing, or next to nothing.

"Accordingly, he gave up his farms, and left for America, where he intended to buy some lots, build houses and out-offices, and then return for his wife and children. But a Divine Providence had otherwise decreed. On the voyage up the Mississippi he took cholera, and died the same day, and was buried on the banks of that river, between Memphis and Cairo, thus leaving his wife, the last surviving child of Anthony O'Byrne, a widow. She, too, died in a few years after (1864), and was buried with her kindred, leaving a good family behind her, one of whom, I heard, became a clergyman. Some other time, kind sir, I will tell you

more about the country, and the old people that lived there, as I see you take an interest in them, and I like it myself, too."

Thus far Tibbot O'Toole. When next we saw him he was "in extremis," and we did what we could to smoothen his journey to heaven, to take his place, we trust, beside his kinsman, St. Lorcán. For further particulars see the "History of the Clan O'Toole and other Leinster Septs."

Having brought this sketch of the history of the Clan O'Byrne to a conclusion, it only remains for us, in order to give it some semblance of completeness, to refer the reader to the O'Byrne Pedigree, commencing with Faelán, king of Leinster, third son of Murcádh Mór, also king of Leinster, who was the common progenitor of the O'Tooles, O'Donohues of Leinster, and the O'Byrnes.

The O'Byrnes named their territory Hy Faelán, after their father, and took for their own name that of their grandfather, "Bran" (Bran Mut), which, anglicized, has become Byrne or Burn.

We give the two great branches, down to the great Catholic Confederate War of 1641, leaving to each family the option of tracing their respective families from either of these two great branches down to the present time, which many have already done, as may be seen in Mr. O'Hart's great work, "The Irish Pedigrees."

We are sorry to see the O'Byrnes have allowed so many strange Christian names in amongst them, such as William and Edward, &c., and that they do not generally use the patronymic "O," which they have a perfect right to; however, they have kept a firm grip of their lands, at least as tenants, which is, perhaps, more substantial.

Henry Grattan, in 1782, in speaking on the Declaration of Rights, says:—

"No history can produce an instance of men like you musing for years upon oppression, and then upon a determination of right, rescuing the land once yours," which has suggested the following poem:—



*ANTHONY BYRNE O'TOOLE.*

*(Died at Briny, Co. Wicklow, 21st June, 1892).*



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The Battle of Glencmalur, 1580.

In which the English, led by Lord Grey, were shamefully routed and defeated with great loss, by the allied Clans, the O'Toolks, O'Byrnes, and O'Moores, Lord Baltinglass and the Eustaces, led by Feagh M'Hugh O'Byrne.

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Breathe forth my soul in thrilling song,  
Since fate may now decide,  
If o'er our necks for ages long,  
Our foe is still to ride ;  
Or if, regardful of our sires,  
We flaunt the flag they bore,  
And trace upon its emerald fold,  
The land we've had, the land we'll hold.

Land of O'Donnell and O'Neill !  
Land of O'Byrne and O'Toole !  
Where faith inspires with fervid zeal,  
And love and beauty rule,  
Ah ! surely God decreed it not  
That thou should suckle slaves,  
To cringe and starve, to die and rot,  
In unremembered graves ;  
Not so, since now in hosts enrolled,  
We've pledged our oaths—the land to hold.

Dumb is the tongue, and deaf the ear,  
That heedeth not that cry,  
Which thrills the traitor's heart with fear,  
And makes the dastard fly—  
A cry that rends the helot's chains,  
And bids the feudal lords,  
Restore at once those broad domains.  
Usurped by alien hordes,  
For, doomed at length, their knell we've told,  
In thundering tones—the land we'll hold.

The dawn has come—oh, glorious sight!  
Of freedom's opening day,  
And all the clouds of slavery's night,  
Affrighted, shrink away;  
While we, like Roman legions, stand,  
Defiant, proud, and strong;  
Impatient for our chief's command,  
To crush the powers of wrong.  
'Mid shouts o'er all the nations roll'd—  
The land we've won—the land we'll hold.

#### THE O'DONOHUES (OF LEINSTER).

THEY belong to the same common stem as the O'Tooles and O'Byrnes. By Murcadh Mor's will (A.D. 726) they were allotted Feracualan, which was afterwards known by the name of Ui Donchada, and comprised the present Co. Dublin and East Wicklow, from which they were driven by the English invasion to South Wicklow and the borders of Carlow and Wexford, where their descendants are now located. (See their pedigree.)

#### THE O'CAVANAGHS.

THE Kavanaghs belong to the same common stock. They have produced many noble and gallant warriors, as Donnell Spainach Kavanagh and Art Murrough Kavanagh, whose history is well told by D'Arcy McGee. Their pedigree, which we annex, is an epitome of their history.















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